

National conference a success for Holyoke FBLA members

Written by Holyoke Enterprise



Six students represented Holyoke Future Business Leaders of America at the organization's National Conference in Anaheim, Calif. June 23-29.

Briar Bergner, KrisAnna Ham, Sarah Heermann, Sydney Nelson, Elise Nelson and Chasity Pelle competed against the top FBLA members in the nation. State secretary Elise Nelson participated in officer events, and other members attended leadership workshops throughout the week. All members also participated in state and national meetings.

Holyoke's Local Chapter Annual Business Report team, made up of Bergner, Ham and Heermann, finished in 10th place at the national competition. Their business report documents all of the chapter's projects and events throughout the year. At the end of the conference, the team was honored with the opportunity to walk across the stage in front of 7,500 fellow competitors and advisors to accept their trophy.

Accompanying Ham and the students, Lori Nelson was a chaperone for the conference. As owner of Computers Etc., Nelson has been working with the chapter's fundraising efforts. As part of the partnership, Nelson sponsored the Job Interview event.

The conference began with an opening session which was developed specifically for FBLA members to improve their leadership skills. The session featured keynote speaker Todd Newton. Newton is best known to audiences worldwide for his work on E! Entertainment Television.

He inspired members and reminded them about the important role they play in the world. Workshops included in the conference focused on bringing out personal leadership qualities.

In addition to gaining leadership skills, members competed in various events against FBLA chapters from across the country. Holyoke had three teams competing in different events.

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Pelle and Sydney Nelson conducted an American Enterprise project consisting of a 30-page report and a seven minute powerpoint presentation.

Heermann participated in the Job Interview competition. An event usually filled with seniors who have a strong focus on their chosen careers, sophomore Heermann was fortunate to make it to callbacks.

Only those placing in the top 10 in each event were recognized at the awards ceremony. The entire ceremony, including Bergner, Ham and Heermann receiving their trophy is available for viewing at www.fbla-pbl.org. The team's trophy will be displayed in the HHS business room.

While students were busy at workshops and competitions, Ham saw many long days as well. This year she completed her third and final year on the National Awards Program committee. The committee is responsible for ensuring a quality conference for all attendees by providing judges, event administrators, event coordinators and grading for over 50 contests.

At the advisor meeting, Ham was honored with a speech outlining her contributions to FBLA and a commemorative glass award.

In addition to the work students did throughout the week, FBLA members spent time seeing the sights in Anaheim. They toured the Garden Walk and went to Huntington Beach, Disneyland and Universal Studios.